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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 27, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for January 27, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

VAKIT / OZGUR GUNDEM / MILLIYET / ZAMAN / HURRIYET / MILLI GAZETE / YENI SAFAK / EVRENSEL / TURKIYE / RADIKAL / CUMHURIYET: After two people died in Hakkari yesterday in an earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale, people stayed outside all night in freezing temperatures, fearing a quake with a bigger magnitude. The Turkish Red Crescent sent 127 tents, 2000 blankets and 100 heaters to the site, established medical care centers and delivered hot soup to people sheltered in the tents. Civil defense teams from Van and Hakkari are working in the region to help people experiencing hardships. With many villages' roads blocked by heavy snowfall, the Governor of Hakkari and Commando Brigade Commander flew over all the villages by helicopter to determine which sites need urgent help.

OZGUR GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: Tension mounted in Siirt when security forces did not allow the burial of two female (alleged) terrorists in a cemetery in the city center. Without the families' approval, public officers buried the bodies in the two women's hometown of Erüh in Siirt province. People continued their protests and engaged in clashes with police, who blockaded the streets. Two military aircraft flew low over the city (allegedly) to intimidate the people. DEHAP (Democratic People's Party) sent a delegation to Siirt, comprising the central administrative board members of the Party and mayors of the region, in order to investigate the matter and generate a report.

CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: The case of 72 security officers accused of causing the death of ten prisoners and wounding another twenty-three in Diyarbakir Prison in 1994 is still in the courts nine years later. The case's conclusion has repeatedly been delayed due to the frequent reshuffling of the judicial board.

CUMHURIYET: The administrative investigation of four (Turkish National Police) special operations team members involved in the killing of Ugur and Ahmet Kaymaz has been finalized. The report, prepared by three civil service inspectors and one police inspector, was presented to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It pointed out that since there is still a court case pending in the matter, the administrative prosecution should wait for the outcome of that process (the team members are being tried for "transgressing the rules of necessary self defense and causing the two killings whose perpetrator cannot be traced or discovered.") On the question of whether or not the suspended team members will be returned to their offices, the inspectors said that it would be left to the sole discretion of the Security Director's office. The report recommends that, should the officers be returned to their positions, they be appointed to a place other than Mardin.

YENI SAFAK: Yusuf Alatas, Chairperson of the Human Rights Association, claimed that a de facto State of Emergency status continues in eastern and southeastern Turkey. Alatas said that the conditions in these regions should be brought by the GoT to the agenda of the National Security Council, because extrajudicial killings are (allegedly) being committed in the region. (Note: The function of the Council is to submit to the Council of Ministers its views on the implementation of national security policy. End Note.)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. ZAMAN: "The customs gate at the port of Iskenderun has been modernized by means of significant automation project", said Metin Yucedal, Chief Director of Customs at Iskenderun Customs Directorate. He spoke during a meeting and awards ceremony celebrating World Customs Day (January 26). At the meeting, Abdulkadir Sari, Governor of Hatay, said that Hatay, with its \$1 billion worth of exports, plays a substantial role in nourishing good economic and cultural ties with Syria. The latest example of this is a plan to build a dam between Hatay and Syria, said Sari.

REID